

GLOBAL COMPANY IMPROVES SAFETY FOR ALABAMA WORKERS

ABOUT GD COPPER(U.S.A.), INC. Golden Dragon Copper (GDC) manufactures copper tubing of all sizes, and has a distribution network spanning the globe. The company strives to produce superior quality tubing at the lowest possible cost and surpass competitors in meeting customer expectations. A global company, GDC has been in operation in Pine Hill, Alabama, since 2014, with a workforce of approximately 230.

THE CHALLENGE. With headquarters overseas, GDC was unfamiliar with the many regulatory obligations in the United States. Consequently, the company began operations in Alabama without several required safety procedures in place. A series of OSHA inspections culminated with the assessment of a significant fine for failure to comply with certain safety obligations. The company did not have an Emergency Action Plan (required by 29 CFR 1910.38a, subsequent to 29 CFR 1910.160), an inventory of confined spaces (required by 29 CFR 1910.146), or a Lockout/Tagout program (required by 29 CFR 1910.147). For a total of 14 violations, including two willful violations and one repeat violation, OSHA assessed the facility an initial fine of \$196,000.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. A team of engineers from the Alabama Technology Network (ATN), a NIST MEP affiliate, arranged with GDC safety personnel to implement improvements and help reduce the fine. First, they developed an Emergency Action Plan with detailed procedures and evacuation routes to follow in case of fire, severe weather, and terrorism. Included in these procedures are steps the company absolutely can not abandon, lest extreme harm occur to personnel or equipment.

Next, GDC personnel worked with ATN to create an assessment and inventory of all confined spaces onsite, including permit-required confined spaces, and began developing an intensive Lockout/Tagout program with machine-specific procedures. ATN followed up with training for all affected personnel. The safety improvements helped reduce the OSHA fine by 30 percent, and the company gained an awareness of the purpose and importance of the safety measures. In addition, with better procedures in place, GDC decreased its lost employee time costs as well as its worker's compensation insurance premium costs.

"It was really helpful to have knowledgeable ATN engineers to assist us with our compliance problems. Not only did we get programs in place to help reduce the size of the OSHA fine, but their expertise helped to convince GDC's management about the importance of getting these programs in place and implemented. ATN has been a valuable asset, and we look forward to using their services in the future."

-Mark Patterson, Safety Coordinator

RESULTS



Reduced OSHA fine by
\$59,000, or 30%



Improved safety at facility



Reduced lost employee time
costs



Reduced worker's
compensation insurance
premium costs

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